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## Fall 2016 Economics Newsletter

Economics Department

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# Economics Newsletter

## FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome back to fall semester! Every year we seem to start earlier than the previous, with classes starting on August 22 and the last day of classes scheduled for December 9. There are always tradeoffs, although I would be willing to trade a few more days of August vacation against the frigid days of December. In preparation for the new school year, Stewart Hall got a face lift with new carpeting and paint, along with some structural improvements in the windows and siding. Sorry, but same old chairs.

We are returning this semester with a full faculty lineup. Monica Garcia Perez is returning from sabbatical serving as a Research Fellow at the Roy Wilkins Center – Humphrey School of Public Affairs. Along with her teaching responsibilities she will be serving as Director of the Faculty Research Group on Immigrant Workers and Director of the SOPA Survey Center this academic year. Rich MacDonald will be serving as the interim Director for the SOPA Research Institute. David Switzer will be serving as the Assessment/Tk20 Coordinator, School of Public Affairs and the Faculty Assessment Director for the University. Ming Lo is currently on leave and chairing the economics department at Metro State.

Starting this year the department is moving to a process called “direct declare” where students will be directly admitted to the major when they are accepted at SCSU. We took this opportunity to update the Degree Audit report to help students better navigate the major requirements. The first milestone on the report includes the principles courses in economics and the math requirement. The second milestone includes the intermediate theory courses in economics and the statistics requirement. The milestones are followed by additional required courses and elective courses, concluding with senior seminar. Hopefully the milestones will motivate students to take these courses early in the major. You may be required to get access codes from your advisor in the near future before registration, that’s just part of the direct declare process.

The Winter Institute is scheduled for February 23 & 24 at SCSU and 912 Regency Plaza. This year’s theme will be “Ideas and Innovation.” We hope to have a great alumni attendance, so please mark your calendars.

Have a great year! Patricia

## MEET THE PROFESSOR



**Professor Ken Rebeck** joined our Economics Department in 2001. He continues to focus his research on creating nationally-used standardized tests for K-12 economics and personal finance teachers, college professors and researchers in economics and financial education. Over the last few years he has experimented with flipped classes and other teaching techniques to expand the variety of delivery methods he incorporates in the classroom. Ken’s wife Tomoko recently earned her Minnesota teaching license specializing in early childhood development. His two daughters are now 5 and 8 years old with a variety of interests, unfortunately none being fishing with Dad.

## EVENTS

### Minnesota Economic Association (MEA) Annual Conference

The 2016 MEA Annual Conference will be held on Friday, October 28, 2016 at Hamline University. The Heller Distinguished Lecture will be delivered by Steven Durlauf of the University of Wisconsin at Madison. The luncheon speaker will be Chris Farrell of American Public Media's Marketplace Money.

Further information may be obtained by visiting the Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis website at <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/mea/>.

## ALUMNI

**Randika De Mel**, a 2013 graduate of our former Public and Nonprofit Institutions graduate program, has been accepted into the 2016-17 Princeton Africa Fellowship in International Development at Princeton University. He will be working with the Sustainable Health Finance Team at Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI) in Pretoria, South



Africa for one year. Randika worked as a Research Intern for Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. At Wilder Research, he worked on monitoring and evaluating projects focused on early childhood education, community legal needs, public health, and youth social entrepreneurship. He also cofounded and worked as a Research Associate for an evaluation collaborative in Minneapolis called Arete Evaluation Collaborative that focused on providing cost

effective research and evaluation consulting services for local nonprofits and universities. Furthermore, his work experience includes monitoring and evaluating research projects in the U.S., Kenya, Philippines, and Jamaica with non-governmental organizations, local nonprofits, and higher education institutions. With over three years of experience in program evaluation, Randika considers himself an evaluator and researcher focused on public health, education, and business and economic development. Randika completed his second masters in International Development (MDP'15) at the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs at UMN.

**Keith Hovland**, a 2016 graduate, is currently working for Rise, Inc. as a Coordinator of Vocational Services.

**Scott Santanni**, owner of Santanni Custom Homes, is the builder featured in a recent Star Tribune article "New retiree builds ultimate kid-friendly 'Grandma house' in Mendota Heights"

<http://m.startribune.com/new-retiree-builds-ultimate-kid-friendly-grandma-house-in-mendota-heights/390014991/>

You can watch a time-lapse video of the project at

<http://santannicustomhomes.com/custom-home-timelapse-video/>

Scott graduated in 2000 with a Bachelor's in Economics and enjoys life in Roseville with his wife Renee (also a 2000 Economics graduate) and two sons.

## GRADUATES

Spring 2016

Reeta Ale Magar\*

Cheick Camara\*

Terry Carper

Zachary Carter\*

Jesse DesMarais

Joseph Falde

Alexander Franta

Jess Fuller

Farhan Guled

Abdullahi Hassan

Mitchell Horras

Keith Hovland

Christelle Mputu\*

Thomas Osterberg

Teddy Pare\*

Joshua Pfohl

Paul Ryan\*

Samba Sacko

Kyle Schramel

Collin Swanson

\* indicates graduate student

## DEAN'S LIST

Spring 2016

Jesse DesMarais

Kaitlyn Durham

Christopher Fuchs

James Harstad

Keith Hovland

Jennifer Hughes

Kristopher Klein

Taisiia Stanishevskia

Mengting Su

SCSU recognizes outstanding scholastic achievement by awarding certificates each term, with the exception of summer semester, to students who earn a grade point average of 3.75 or better. A student must be a degree seeking enrolled student, and must complete at least nine credits of ABCDF graded courses to be eligible for the award.

## WINTER INSTITUTE

Save the Date!

The 2017 Winter Institute will be held on Thursday, February 23rd and Friday, February 24th at St. Cloud State University and 912 Regency in downtown St. Cloud.

The Winter Institute is a two-day conference celebrating economic education. 2017 marks the 55th year of this seminal event. This year's Winter Institute theme will be "Ideas and Innovation."

Please mark your calendars now. Look for more details and registration information as the date approaches.

You may check for updated information at [www.stcloudstate.edu/winterinstitute](http://www.stcloudstate.edu/winterinstitute)

If you would like more information or if you would like to get involved, please contact Cindy Fitzthum [cjfitzthum@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:cjfitzthum@stcloudstate.edu) or Lynn MacDonald [lcmacdonald@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:lcmacdonald@stcloudstate.edu)

## GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

We welcome graduate assistants **Arati Bista**, **Shehram Khan**, **Azat Nurmukhametov**, and **Kejie (Jack) Ruan** to our Applied Economics master's program.

# FACULTY

**Professor David Switzer** has spent the last year serving half-time in SCSU's Office of Strategy, Planning, and Effectiveness (OSPE) as the Faculty Fellow for Assessment. His duties include overseeing assessment of Our Husky Compact and providing guidance to departments for assessment of their programs. He defines assessment as "anything we are doing to determine how well our students are learning" but also includes making changes and improvements whenever they are needed.

For example, how do we know if students are learning what we hope they learn in our Economics programs? In the last few years, the Economics department clarified its Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and established the courses and assignments that are used to assess student performance. Last year, three instructors teaching Senior Seminar (ECON 481) performed an assessment of each student's final paper to determine strengths and weaknesses. As a result of this assessment, our department determined students needed more statistical and econometric work before undertaking the course. Our department will soon require students majoring in Economics or Business Economics to complete either Economic and Business Forecasting (ECON 470) or Introduction to Econometrics (ECON 485) before they may register for Senior Seminar. We believe this requirement will allow students to more easily, confidently, and correctly run the statistical analysis of data which is so crucial to the course.

Over the summer, 15 SCSU faculty members from a wide variety of disciplines scored student papers and presentations as part of assessment of Our Husky Compact's "Communicate Effectively" dimension. Dr. Switzer collected the scores and analyzed the results, and reported the results to campus at a Convocation Week session entitled "Our Husky Compact: Results from the First Year of Assessment." Results indicate that performance along all dimensions of Written Communication and Oral Communication improve significantly between lower-division and upper-division courses, and that performance by seniors is above the national average for senior papers scored using the same rubric.

## We love correspondence from our alumni!

Please keep in touch with us—we welcome new information to include in upcoming newsletters.

## Internships

We are always trying to expand our internship program. Let us know if your company offers internships and we will share this information with our majors.

## Donations

Donating to our scholarships provides both financial support and encouragement to student recipients.

We have several accounts to choose from:

**Economics Scholarship** (*undergraduate scholarships*)

**Rose Marie Gamber Scholarship in Economics** (*undergraduate scholarships*)

**Michael D. White Economics Fellowship** (*graduate scholarships*)

**Economics Foundation** (*Winter Institute and student research*)

**Information on ways to give can be found at**

<http://www.stcloudstate.edu/foundation/waystogive/>

Dr. Mónica García-Pérez

Dr. N. Eric Hampton

Dr. Patricia Hughes (*chair*)

Dr. Eungmin Kang

Dr. Mana Komai

Dr. Ming Chien Lo (*on leave*)

Dr. Lynn MacDonald

Dr. Richard MacDonald

Dr. Nimantha Manamperi

Dr. Masoud Moghaddam

Dr. Artatrana Ratha

Dr. Ken Rebeck

Dr. David Switzer

The goal of our newsletter is to maintain communication with our alumni, faculty, & current students.

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St. Cloud State University is committed to legal affirmative action, equal opportunity, access and diversity of its campus community.  
(<http://scsu.mn/ONIKKT>)